

## Freedom of Information request 382-18

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### Request

1. How many people called NHS Borders' emergency dental helpline last year (be it financial year, calendar year or last 12 month period you have figures for)?
2. How does that compare to the previous two years?
3. What was the longest time someone had to wait for treatment?
4. How many NHS dentists are registered in the Borders?
5. How many patients are registered at NHS dentists in the Borders?
6. How many practices are accepting new patients on the NHS?
7. Is there a waiting list to register as a new patient - if so, how many people are on it and what is the longest anyone has had to wait?

### Response

The NHS General Dental Service (GDS) is usually the first point of contact for NHS dental treatment. The majority of GDS is provided by independent dentists ("High Street dentists") who have arrangements with NHS boards to provide GDS. People register with a dentist in order to receive the full range of NHS treatment available under GDS.

Historically, there were a number of salaried dentists who also provided GDS. Salaried dentists were directly employed by NHS boards and provided an alternative service to independent dentists when this was considered the best solution to meet local needs. People could also register with salaried dentists.

Historically, the Community Dental Service (CDS) provided a 'safety net' dental service for people who were unable to obtain care through the GDS, such as patients with special care needs or patients living in areas where there were few NHS dentists providing GDS. It was not possible to register with the CDS and data in relation to patients seen by a community dentist were not collected or counted as part of the national dental database.

From 1 January 2014 the salaried dental service merged with the CDS to become the Public Dental Service (PDS).

The main role of PDS dentists is to provide GDS for people who cannot access care from an independent dentist. People previously registered with a salaried dentist will remain registered under the PDS. People who were seen by the CDS will now be able to register with PDS dentists.

1. For the period January – December 2017 2453 people called the NHS Borders' Dental Emergency Line.
2. Figures for the previous 2 years are no longer held, therefore under Section 17 of the FOI(S)A 2002 this data is not held.
3. NHS Borders do not record how long someone has had to wait for treatment after calling the dental helpline. All calls are triaged and an appointment is given according to their condition. Therefore under Section 17 of the FOI(S)A 2002 this data is not held.
4. There are 70 NHS dentists registered in the Borders providing treatment under General Dental Services and Public Dental Services.
5. There are currently 89,490 patients registered at NHS dentists in the Borders.
6. There are currently 8 practices within the Borders accepting new NHS patients.

7. Within the Public Dental Service there is only one waiting list which is for the Coldstream area. The number of patients who have opted to be seen by Coldstream Dental Centre and who are on the waiting list for the PDS is 596. The list has been active since May 2016.

These patients have chosen not to register elsewhere and are not one of the priority groups that the Public Dental Service caters for. There has not been contact with those waiting to see if they have registered elsewhere since submission of the form indicating they wanted to register at Coldstream. All patients who are unregistered can access dental care by contacting the dental enquiry line 8.30am to 6pm daily.

NHS Borders are not aware of any waiting lists for General Dental Services with independent practitioners. As independent practitioners they would hold this data.

Under Section 15 of the FOI(S)A Duty to provide advice and assistance further information on dental services within the NHS Borders area is available on the following websites:

<http://www.nhsbordersdentists.scot.nhs.uk/index.asp>

<http://www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/our-services/a-z/d/>

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or [foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk).

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **382-18** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.